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HARTFORD

Hartson

NCP

Countefs of Salifbury.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is performed at the

THEATRES ROYAL

IN

DRURY LANE

AND

COVENT GARDEN.

The FOURTH EDITION.

By HALL HARTSON, Esq.

LONDON:

Printed for W. GRIFFIN, at GARRICK's HEAD, in CATHARINE-STREET. 1769.

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TO

ELIZABETH,

COUNTESS OF MOIRA.

MADAM,

THE attention you have vouchſafed to the Counteſs of Saliſbury and the Author, ever ſince they have had the honour of being known to your Ladyſhip, perſuades me that you will take pleaſure in hearing it has been favourably received on the Engliſh Theatre. Stript now of all ſtage decoration, and the aſſiſtance which it has hitherto received from the moſt animated performance, it is to undergo a ſtricter ſcrutiny, that of the cloſet; a ſcrutiny for which it is indeed but little provided. I know your Ladyſhip will make a tender allowance for want of experience in the Author, and ſuch errors as are incident to human imperfection; but this is an indulgence, which I doubt the critic will not ſo readily ſhew him. But however he may cenſure, I muſt ever think myſelf happy in having already acquired your Ladyſhip's good opinions. I am alſo flattered, as often as I think of the near reſemblance my Heroine has of your Ladyſhip. Had I been earlier honoured with your Ladyſhip's acquaintance, I think I could

have

have much enlarged the character. And yet there are many virtues, many delicacies, which it would have been impoſſible for me to have preſerved in the picture, of which thoſe only can be truly ſenſible, who have the happineſs of being acquainted with the Original.

Pleaſe, Madam, to accept the following attempt, as an offering of my gratitude for many favours; an imperfect indeed, but honeſt proof, of the eſteem, which is due from,

MADAM,

Your LADYSHIP's

Moſt reſpectful,

Moſt obliged,

Humble Servant,

H. HARTSON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE COUNTESS OF SALISBURY made her appearance about two years ago in Ireland, where ſhe was received with very ſingular marks of favour; the Author there had many friends, and with all the partiality they might be ſuppoſed to have for him, thoſe friends did not heſitate to declare, that the excellent performance of Mrs. Dancer and Mr. Barry, contributed largely to the ſucceſs of the Piece: written in his early youth, without having much knowledge of the ſtage, or dramatic performances, the Author is ſenſible what his Tragedy muſt be, notwithſtanding the ſmiles with which it has been indulg'd. England, agreeable to the character of good nature and generoſity which it has eſtabliſhed through all the world, has kindly followed the example of its ſiſter nation, and received with indulgence the attempt of a young Writer, who is indeed ambitious of pleaſing, but dares not aſpire to excellence. He attributes, in great meaſure, his good fortune now, to what his friends attributed it before, the animated performance of Mrs. Dancer and Mr. Barry: it is theirs to endeavour to ſupport a reputation already gained; his to aim at improvement, in order to acquire one.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY

Mr. WESTON, in the CHARACTER of a TEAGUE.

MY jewels, I'm come to ſpeak in the behalf——
Hoot, Devil burn you all, you makes me laugh;
Upon my ſoul now I don't take it well in you:
Arra, be eaſy, till I'm after telling you:
Smit with the love of glory and of pelf,
To night, a bard from Dublin its own ſelf,
Has brought a play here for your approbation,
A very pretty thing by my ſalvation——
If you'll truſt Iriſh evidence I mean——
I can't the ſtory very well explain;
But its about a Counteſs and an Earl,
The Counteſs is a mighty honeſt girl;
But there's a villian with a damn'd cramp'd name,
Makes ſuch propoſhals—'tis a burning ſhame——
Another too—a Knight—bekeys as why——
But hould you know, you'll ſee it by and by;
And then 'tis time enough to tell the plot.
O, but that's true, I'd like to have forgot,
The dreſſes—'Pon my conſcience in my days
I never ſaw their peer, they're all a blaze.
Then there's a child, the ſweeteſt little rogue!——
Only excuſe a trifling ſpice of brogue——
He'll make you cry your eyes out, I'll be bound——
'Tis Ireland is the true poetic ground.
The Muſes—Phœbus, heath'niſh cant I loath!
What's Mount Parnaſſus to the Hill of Howth?
Or all the ſcenes each fooliſh poet paints——
O bub bub-boo! give me the Iſle of Saints.
Turn up your noſes, caval now and carp——
Muſha, I'm ſure our emblem is the harp.
But ſtop, the bell rings.—Pait they'll ſoon begin;
'Tis time for me to be a going in.
I take my lave then—but dear craters mind——
Pray to our Iriſh poetry be kind:
'Tis a new manufacture in effect——
And yours, my ſouls t' encourage and protect;
No critic cuſtom then exacted be,
Paſs it like Iriſh linen, duty free.

EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Mrs. DANCER.

THIS virgin author's ſuch a bluſhing rogue——
What! no gay, lively, laughing epilogue!
"Madam (ſays he, and look'd ſo wiſe) in Greece"—
(Greece; that's their cant) "no jeſting clos'd the piece.
"Play, epilogue and all were grave and ſolemn"——
Then, Sir, the town were fools that did not mawl 'em.
No—let your heroine, in this laughing age,
Come thus (as Bayes ſays) ſouſe upon the ſtage;
Then with a jaunty air, half ſmile, half grin,
Curtſey quite round the boxes, and begin.

A ſpark from court, no huſband to detect him!
A pretty fellow too, and yet reject him!——
Now, Ladies, let me die but it was ſilly——
You'll not approve ſuch horrid prudery—will ye?——
I ſhou'd have bleſs'd the occaſion, and receiv'd him!
He ſhou'd have kneel'd and vow'd, and I—believ'd him;
Laughed, danc'd and ſported it ſtill ſpouſe came over;
Then kiſs'd my dear—while Betty hid my lover.

But here again our Poet checks my flight,
"Nay, Madam, you miſtake the matter quite.
"My heroine liv'd in antient, honeſt times;
"Cards were unknown, and gallantries were crimes"—
'Pſha! what if females then were ſeldom rovers?
Huſbands—(aye, there's the cauſe) were warm as lovers.
Their warlike days indeed were ſpent in killing;
But then, at night—no turtles were ſo billing.

Well—tho' he gives me no ſmart things to ſay,
I wiſh this begging face may ſave his play:
The thing may mend, and learn to pleaſe you better—
Do then—nay, pray you ſhew him ſome good nature.

Perſons of the Drama.

	Drury-Lane.	*Covent-Garden.*
ALWIN, - - -	Mr. Barry.	Mr. Powell.
RAYMOND, - -	Mr. Reddiſh.	Mr. Benſley.
GREY, - - - -	Mr. Parker.	Mr. Clarke.
MORTON, - - -	Mr. Palmer.	Mr. Perry.
SIR ARDOLF, - -	Mr. Baniſter.	Mr. Fox.
LEROCHES, - -	Mr. Strange.	Mr. Gardner.
LORD WILLIAM,	Miſs Palmer.	Miſs. Cockayne
ELEANOR, - - -	Mrs. Reddiſh.	Mrs. Dubellamy.
COUNTESS OF SALISBURY,	Mrs. Barry.	Mrs. Yates.

KNIGHTS, PEASANT, &c.

SCENE Saliſbury Caſtle, and the Country about it.

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THE

Counteſs of Saliſbury.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Avenue leading to a Gothic Caſtle.

Enter GREY and FIRST KNIGHT.

GREY.

A Meſſenger diſpatch'd by lady Saliſbury!

KNIGHT.

And in the ſpecious guiſe he wore, had paſs'd
Unqueſtion'd, had not I in happy ſeaſon
Approach'd, even as th' unwary centinels
Half op'd the gate. By threats o'eraw'd in part,
In part thro' hope of favour won, he own'd
At length, by whom employed, whither bent,
And for what purpoſe.

GREY.

Say—

KNIGHT.

Strait to repair
To Marlborough; where now, as fame reports,
Our king reſides, with all his peers; and there

To ſeek the lord de Warren; to what end
This paper will, as I ſuppoſe, inform you—
I was about to bear it to lord Raymond.

GREY.

That care be mine. Henceforward it concerns
Us near, our vigilance be doubly firm.

[*Exit* KNIGHT.

GREY *reads.*

" The counteſs of SALISBURY, to her illuſtrious
" friend, the lord de WARREN.
" I have loſt my huſband—Me and my lands
" lord Raymond claims, as by royal grant aſſigned
" to him. He has baniſhed my train, encom-
" paſſed me with his creatures, and holds me a
" priſoner in my own caſtle. If the memory of
" thy noble friend be dear to thee, haſte and
" reſcue the afflicted

ELA."

How near was Raymond's hope, the beauteous hope
He tended with unceaſing care, how near
My riſing fortunes marr'd—I like not this:
Her, and her rich domains he wou'd poſſeſs;
Yet in his breaſt there lives that kind of heart
Withholds him from the path that's neareſt—He,
That would be great, muſt firſt be bold.
I hate thoſe motley'd characters;
Something, I know not what, 'twixt good and ill,
Yet neither abſolute; all good, all ill
For me—That day, ſaith he, that happy day,
Which ſees the counteſs mine, ſhall amply pay
Thy ſervices: a doubtful balance this
Whereon my fortunes hang—This way he moves;
And, by his gait and geſture, ill at eaſe—
We muſt be firm;

My

My hopes demand it, and the time admits
No weak, no ſcrupulous delay—

Enter RAYMOND.

RAYMOND.

To ſue,
But ever without grace to ſue—oh Grey!
I am even weary of the vain purſuit.

GREY.

It is, in truth, my lord, an irkſome labour.

RAYMOND.

But now I caſt me at the fair one's feet;
Pleaded my paſſion with whatever arts
Might beſt the gentle purpoſe aid; but ſhe,
Inſtead of ſuch return as I might hope,
Repaid me with an eye of cold contempt.
Of her late galland lord ſhe ſpoke; his merits
In oppoſition hateful plac'd to mine.
Urg'd then with recollection of her wrongs,
Like the loud torrent, with ſteep winter rains
O'ercharg'd, in all the looſe, ungovern'd ſway
Of wrath and indignation, ſhe aſſail'd me.

GREY.

And did my lord, in this unſeemly faſhion,
Hear all with equal temper? Wak'd he not
With ſuch a peal—

RAYMOND.

Thou know'ſt not what it is
To love like me—Long time (for paſſion now
Had ſhed o'er all her charms a brighter glow,
That like Jove's daughter moſt ſhe look'd, ſevere
In youthful beauty) long I lay, o'eraw'd
And ſilenc'd as by ſome ſuperior being;
Till wak'd by pride, quick from the floor I ſprung;

Warn'd her how ſhe provok'd my power;
'Twas great, 'twas now within theſe walls ſupreme;
I long had gently woo'd her, but that love,
Tho' patient, would not always brook diſdain.

GREY.

'Twas well: and what enſu'd?

RAYMOND.

Silence at firſt,
Then tears; bright drops, like May-morn dews that fall
From the ſweet bloſſom'd thorn. Back in her chair
She ſunk—Oh! had you ſeen her then, diſſolv'd
In all the ſoft, the lovely languiſhment
Of woe; while at her knee, with countenance
Moſt piteous ſtood her beauteous boy, and look'd
As if each tear, which from his mother fell,
Wou'd force a paſſage to his little heart—
I fled; elſe had I kneel'd, and wept myſelf
As well as ſhe.

GREY.

O ſhame to manhood!—ſuits
Such weakneſs with our hopes?

RAYMOND.

She muſt, ſhe muſt,
Yes, Grey, ſhe muſt be mine—and yet—yet fain
Wou'd I perſuade the fair one, not compel.

GREY.

Say to what purpoſe then was ſeiz'd her caſtle?
When ſhe your ſuit rejected, then perforce
To claim her as the gift of royal favour!
To lord it here ſo long, and now to falter—
My lord, my lord, the mound is overleapt,
What now forbids but without further pauſe
To crop the rich, the golden fruits within?

RAYMOND.

RAYMOND.

Ungracious is the love reluctance yields;
And cold, cold even as marble is the maid,
Who comes unwilling to another's arms.

GREY.

In brief, would you partake the lady's bed?

RAYMOND.

What means the queſtion?

GREY.

Look on that, my lord:
Better *reluctant* come, than not at all.

RAYMOND.

—— How came this to your hand?

GREY.

By one whoſe cares
Of thee demand no trivial recompence.
His wakeful eye it was deſcry'd the bearer;
Elſe had the watch with all their vigilance
Prov'd inſufficient.

RAYMOND.

My better angel interpos'd.

GREY.

Had this it's purpos'd ſcope attain'd—my lord,
Were this but wiſper'd in our Henry's ear—
He gave the royal nod, you ſay: true, he
Permitted, but thus far; that you ſhou'd woo
The lady, and, her choice approving, wed;
No more. By us the public ear is told
She hath approv'd: our artifice hath ſpread
The rumour; and with ſome it is receiv'd
That ſhe is now your full-eſpouſed conſort:
But truth, my lord, long cannot reſt conceal'd;

It

It will abroad, of that be ſure, in ſpite
Of all our ſtudied wiles.

RAYMOND.

What's to be done?

GREY.

'Tis critical; and muſt be manag'd nicely—
But ſee, with Eleanor the counteſs comes;
And in her hand the young lord William. Here
Her cuſtom is to walk: retire we now;
And thou obſerve the counſels of a friend.

[*Exeunt ambo.*

Enter Lady SALISBURY, Lord WILLIAM, ELEANOR.

Lady SALISBURY.

Talk'ſt thou of patience? What! the very roof,
That ſhould protect and ſhelter me, become
My priſon! Aw'd, and threatened, as I am,
By this intruder!—Cruel deſtiny!
Had I not more than common griefs before?

ELEANOR.

In evil hour thy hoſpitable gates
Were open'd to receive him.

Lady SALISBURY.

Unguarded that I was!—But who could then
Foreſee the purpoſe of his coming?

ELEANOR.

Who
Can think even yet, that once repuls'd, he e'er
Wou'd thus preſume?

Lady SALISBURY.

Is there no ſuccour then?
No generous hand to vindicate my wrongs?—
Oh

Oh Saliſbury! Saliſbury! why, if yet thou liv'ſt—
Fond hope! he lives not, elſe with ſpeed of thought
Would he repair to his afflicted Ela.

ELEANOR.

Why, deareſt lady, will you yield you up
A prey to purpos'd ſorrow? Time is fruitful;
And the next hour perhaps may bring thee comfort.

Lady SALISBURY.

Day after day I have watch'd the joyleſs hours:
Night after night, when ſome fleet courier ſent
Before perchance, or letter-fraught with ſweet
Aſſurance of his ſafety might appear;
Five tedious moons have paſs'd ſince firſt were told
The diſmal tidings; no fleet courier ſent
Before, alas! nor letter with ſuch ſweet
Aſſurance yet appears—He's gone! he's loſt!
And I ſhall never, never ſee him more.

ELEANOR.

Ah! ſuffer not the leaden hand of cold
Deſpair thus weigh thee down; I yet have hope—

Lady SALISBURY.

Away with hope, away. No, no; full loud,
As I remember, and outrageous blew
The ſtorm, that even the ſolid fabric ſhook
Of yonder walls; deep-rooted oaks gave way:
Churches and ſpires were overturn'd; nor even
The peaſant's humble roof eſcap'd that hour.
The fleet, ſave only one, one luckleſs ſhip,
Have all return'd; my lord nor hath been ſeen,
Alas! nor ever heard of ſince the ſtorm.

ELEANOR:

Heaven viſit her affliction, and beſtow
That patience which ſhe needs.

Lady

Lady SALISBURY.

No, Eleanor; no more ſhall he
To theſe deſerted walls return. No more
Shall trophies, won by many a gallant deed,
Thro' the long hall in proud proceſſion move;
No more fair Saliſbury's battlements and towers
Re-echo to th' approaching trumpet's voice.
Never, oh! never more ſhall Ela run
With throbbing boſom at the well-known ſound,
T'unlock his helmet, conqueſt-plum'd, to ſtrip
The cuiſhes from his manly thigh, or ſnatch
Quick from his breaſt the plated armour, wont
T' oppoſe my fond embrace—Sweet times farewel.

Lord WILLIAM.

Mother, why do you ſpeak ſo? you make me ſad.

Lady SALISBURY.

It is too ſoon, my child, for thee to know
What ſadneſs is.

Lord WILLIAM.

Will not my father come home ſoon? Eleanor told me he wou'd: ſhe wou'd not tell a lye.

Lady SALISBURY.

No, love.

Lord WILLIAM.

Then he will come.

Lady SALISBURY.

Sweet innocence! I fear he will not.

Lord WILLIAM.

I hope he is not ſick.

Lady

Lady SALISBURY.

—Go, lovely prattler, ſeek thy toys; go, go.

Lord WILLIAM.

I will, good mother; but don't be ſad, or I ſhall be ſo too. [*Exit.*

Lady SALISBURY.

Sweet ſtate of childhod! unallay'd with cares;
Serene as ſpring-tide morn, new-welcom'd up
With bleat of lamb, with note of woodlark wild;
With riper years come paſſions turbulent
And rude, a baleful crew, unnumber'd as
The foreſt leaves that ſtrew the earth in autumn.
When happineſs is round thee, when thou art on
The lap of downy eaſe, when thou art cheriſh'd
In the fair boſom of unruffl'd joy,
Comes a fell hand, daſhes thee rudely down,
And leaves thee to deſpair.

ELEANOR.

Ceaſe,
Ceaſe, lady, to afflict thee: Raymond may,
I truſt he will, e'er long retire, and give
Thee eaſe again—But hither comes his minion:
Much with his lord he can; and, as he liſts,
To purpoſes of good or ill o'er-rules
His mind: if he accoſt thee, ſpeak him gently.

Enter GREY.

As you are fair above all other women,
So may you lend to that I would implore
A gracious ear.

Lady SALISBURY.

Without more preface, briefly ſpeak thy ſuit.

GREY.

To love, but ne'er to reap of love the ſweet
Returns, is ſure the worſt of ills.

Lady SALISBURY.

And what of that?

GREY.

Tho' love denied, yet pity may do much
To ſoothe the wound that beauty gives—In brief,
Thou much-rever'd! my ſuit is in behalf of
Raymond.

Lady SALISBURY.

Then I will ſpare us both ſome coſt
Of words—In brief, I love him not, nor pity;
So tell thy lord—I would be private—hence.

GREY.

Your words are brief indeed; but of that kind
I dare not, muſt not bear my lord.

Lady SALISBURY.

Muſt not!

GREY.

'Tis cruel toward the man who loves ſo fondly.

Lady SALISBURY.

Doth he aſſume the ſpecious name of love?
Love is a bright, a generous quality,
Heaven gave to noble minds; pure and unmix'd
With every groſſer ſtuff; a goodly flower,
Shoots up and bloſſoms in great ſouls alone.

GREY.

The mind, th' exalted ſoul thou nam'ſt, is his.
Lives there a youth more gentle of condition,
In fair accompliſhments more grac'd, admir'd?

If

If beauty ſway thy fond regards, if wealth,
I know not in fair England one with him
Can vie.

Lady SALISBURY.

Is then the ſtar, the peerleſs ſtar,
That late was gaz'd on, quite obſcur'd? What tho'
He may have ſet, hath he not left a train
Of glory in the ſkies?—Th' illuſtrious name
Of Saliſbury yet ſurvives—If wealth—but mark me;
Were he of all the wealth poſſeſs'd from where
Th' Eaſt Indian bids the ſun good morrow, to where
Th' Atlantic in her wide-extended lap
Receives him ſetting; cou'd he in each hand
A thouſand ſceptres place, not all ſhou'd bribe
Me to his bed—No, Saliſbury! thou haſt been
The huſband of my early love; with thee,
That love was all interr'd; and when I pluck
It forth again, gape wide that earth wherein
Thou lieſt, quick ſnatch me from the light of Heaven,
And ſwallow me within her loweſt priſon!

GREY.

For pity's ſake yet ſoften; for, oh ſure
No former love could ever equal this;
No boſom boaſt the generous flame wherewith
Lord Raymond glows for thee, admir'd fair!

Lady SALISBURY.

Hear this, ye Heavens, and grant me patience—Where's
My people? where the freedom that I late
Was bleſt with? Wherefore is my palace throng'd
With ſtrangers? Why, why are my gates ſhut up
And fortified againſt their rightful miſtreſs?

GREY.

Madam—

Lady SALISBURY.

Is this the love he boasts?
Is this the fair accompliſh'd, this the gentle youth?
Muſt I recall to mind—Came he not then
Even while the memory of my dear lov'd lord
Was green: while ſorrow yet was in mine eyes?
—Tears! ye will choak me--Came he not even then,
And broke in on my ſorrows? Like a ſpoiler
He came, heap'd up the meaſure of my woes,
Added new anguiſh to th' afflicted heart,
And ſwell'd the current of the widow's tears.

GREY.

Madam, where he that ſpoiler thou proclaim'ſt,
He need not now thus humbly ſue for that
His power long ſince, unaſk'd might have extorted.

Lady SALISBURY.

Ha!—what art thou that thus preſum'ſt to threaten?
Extorted!—Hence thou rude one, bolder even
Than him who calls thee ſlave.

GREY.

Madam, you ſpeak
As though you knew me not.

Lady SALISBURY.

I know thee well—
To what concerns lord Raymond I have ſpoke,
My final purpoſe fix'd:
For thee, I charge thee ſhun my preſence; hence,
And learn the diſtance that befits thy calling.

GREY.

Not ere I ſpeak more fully to the cauſe—
Nay, lady, look not on me with ſo ſtern
An eye, but give me patient hearing—

Lady SALISBURY.

No more; I'll hear no more,

GREY.

Not hear!—When next we meet,—I will be heard.
[*Exit.*]

Lady SALISBURY.

What meant he, Eleanor?—I will be heard.

ELEANOR.

Alas! I know not: but a ſoul he hath,
Prompt and alert to acts of deſperate thinking.
Hardly thou art beſet; O lady, lend
An ear to what thy Eleanor would counſel.
When next he come (for that he hath obtain'd
Of Raymond leave to woo thee to his will,
I know) aſſume a gentler carriage. Seem
As tho' you may hereafter to his ſuit
Incline. Be rul'd: neceſſity oft lends
A ſanction to deceit. Demand a pauſe:
My lord of Saliſbury's fate yet unconfirm'd
Shall add thereto a ſeeming colour. Chance,
Mean time, that comes or ſoon or late to all,
To thee may come with unexpected ſuccour.

Lady SALISBURY.

———Sincerity,
Thou ſpotleſs as the ſnowy-veſted hill!
Forgive me, if by lawleſs power conſtrain'd,
I turn this once from thy long-trodden path;
It muſt be ſo———
Oh Saliſbury! Saliſbury! thou lamented ſhade!
Deſcend from thoſe pure manſions, where thou ſitſt
Exalted; hover o'er me; and as thou
Wert wont, ſupport me in this hour of trial.
[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE within the Caſtle.

Enter RAYMOND and GREY.

GREY.

AWAY, my lord, away with every care;
The conflict's paſt, and fortune is our own—
Defeated once, again I fought the fair;
I ſought her, and prevail'd.

RAYMOND.

By all the joys, the nameleſs joys, that on
The precious hour of ſoft compliance wait,
I will requite thee nobly. Say, for much
My wonder's mov'd, how haſt thou found
Such grace? How wrought this change, thus ſudden, thus
Unhop'd from her late bearing?

GREY.

Uncertain is the ſex—but that imports not.
It now remains, that proof, ſuch proof be ſought
Of Saliſbury's fate, as by minute detail
Of circumſtance ſhall with the lady gain
Prompt credence—Hear what I have deviſ'd, if you
Approve—

Enter a KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

My lord, two ſtrangers I have brought,
Within the precincts of the caſtle found.

RAYMOND.

RAYMOND.

Say'ſt thou? two ſtrangers? of what quality?

KNIGHT.

With me they were of ſpeech not over-prompt;
But by their outward guiſe they wou'd ſeem men
As with ſome pious purpoſe charg'd. Severe
The younger ſeems, but of excelling form;
And wiſhes to recruit his wearied limbs
Beneath the friendly covert of this roof.

RAYMOND.

Conduct them to our preſence—[*Exit* KNIGHT.]
I were loth,
The weary traveller to diſmiſs my gates,
Unhoſpitably rude; yet none I wiſh,
While we are yet ſuſpended at the nod
Of peeviſh and uncertain chance, approach
Theſe walls.

Re-enter KNIGHT, with STRANGERS.

Whence, and what are you?

FIRST STRANGER.

What we are,
Theſe weeds, tho' we were ſilent, might unfold.
Alwin I am call'd, my fellow-traveller
Leroches. Our way was bent for Canterbury,
With purpoſe of a pious vow: o'ertaken
By wearineſs from travel, and deſire
Of food, we journey'd hither-ward, in hope
The lord of theſe fair turrets, firſt deſcry'd
At cloſe of evening, might befriend our toils.

RAYMOND.

Whence have you come?

ALWIN.

From France, not many days

RAYMON

RAYMOND.

ay, what occaſion may have call'd you thither?

ALWIN.

'o aid (Heav'n proſper long) my country's weal.

RAYMOND.

'ou are a ſoldier then?

ALWIN.

I have been ſuch;
nd to be ſuch was my moſt dear inclining;
mit with the love, even from my greeneſt youth,
f honeſt arms. Some ſhare of fame I too
tchiev'd—But ill the ſoldier it beſeems
'o trumpet his own praiſes.

RAYMOND.

Ceaſe not ſo.
'ho' in the ſchool of war untutour'd, much
pleaſeth me to hear the brave man's labours.

ALWIN.

'one but have heard how ſome time ſince was ſent
'o claim of Lewis certain lands uſurp'd)
puiſſant force——

RAYMOND.

Were you therein employed?

ALWIN.

neath the royal banner I enroll'd,
s was my bent, in queſt of fame.

RAYMOND.

Indeed!
ord Saliſbury then perchance of thee was known?

ALWIN.

ALWIN.

I knew him well; our Liege's near ally,
And ſecond to duke Richard in command.
Faſt by his ſide was my allotted poſt
Upon the marſhal'd field: by him I fought,
For him had died.

RAYMOND.

Of him fame loudly ſpeaks,
That in thoſe wars he was a gallant man.

ALWIN.

He was not wont, while others bravely fought,
To look unactive on.

LEROCHES.

A foe like him
France never knew, of all that warrior hoſt,
Which like an inundation England pour'd
On her affrighted ſhores—

RAYMOND.

But what
Have prov'd his latter fortunes I ſhou'd wiſh
To learn—Say, courteous ſtranger, if thou canſt,
Of this renowned lord: a rumour hath
Long ſince prevail'd, that he on Gallia's coaſt
Was wreck'd with all his crew.

ALWIN.

What cauſe there was
Of ſuch report, alas! theſe eyes have ſeen;
How true in part it is, too ſure this tongue
Can teſtify.

RAYMOND.

I pray you let us hear.

ALWIN.

—O'ercharg'd with human prey, fell war had ceas'd
To walk his waſteful round; well pleas'd we turn
Us from the blood-ſtain'd field; exulting each
With ſome rich ſpoil, trophies by valiant dint
Of arms atchiev'd. Forthwith the eager hoſt
Embark.
And now the chalky cliffs on Albion's coaſt
I' our ſtraining view appear'd; th' exulting crew
With peals redoubled greet the well known ſhores—
Ill fated men!—in vain the anxious dame
Oft mounts the high-rais'd tower, thence earneſt looks
Haply if her wiſh'd for lord may come; in vain
The prattling boy oft aſks her of his ſire,
That never, never ſhall return.

RAYMOND.

Proceed,
Good ſtranger; what was the event?

ALWIN.

Anon
The winds began to ſhift; up roſe a ſtorm
And heav'd the boſom of the troubled deep.
On the ſwoln billow ſits enthron'd grim Death,
And ſhakes his fatal dart—The fleet, which late
In ſuch fair order ſail'd, is now diſpers'd.
Before the wind we drove, left to the mercy
Of the wild waves, and all-diſpoſing Heaven—
Oh my lov'd friends! aſſociates of my toils!
Reſcu'd in vain from War's wide-waſteful arm,
Here end your labours; here ſweet life forſakes you.
For me, a ſlender plank, next to the hand
Of ſome good angel, bore me to the ſhore.
Of full five hundred gallant lives, which late
Embark'd, not one that fatal hour ſurviv'd.

RAY-

RAYMOND.

Save only thee.

ALWIN.

Save only me.

RAYMOND.

Speak, now ſecure, for nearly it concerns
My quiet, ſpeak—was Saliſbury of your crew?

ALWIN.

Alas! too ſure.

RAYMOND.

Enough—Thy courteſy
Of us may well, and ſhall be well requited.
Of this our friend accept mean time his prompt
Regards; anon we ſhall be glad to hold
Some further converſe with you.

[*Exit* ALW. LERO, *and* KNIGHT.

GREY.

Of this ſtranger
What thinks my lord?

RAYMOND.

As of an angel, ſent
To waft me on his wings ſtrait to the ſummit
Of all my wiſhes—With what a gallant grace
He bears him!—Much I wiſh to hear him ſpeak
Again; to hear the battles he has fought,
And all the ſtory of his life and fortunes.

GREY.

That we ſhall learn hereafter: but 'tis meet
That he to lady Saliſbury firſt unfold
The ſum of what he had reported.

RAYMOND.

Methinks
I now behold her, like ſome full-blown flower,
The faireſt of the garden, late o'ercharg'd
With ſhowers, her head declining ſad, whilſt he
Recounts the ſtory of her Saliſbury's fate.
Wou'd ſhe were mine without a tear;
Without a ſigh!—But ſhe muſt weep; ſhe muſt;
Thereon my *all* depends.—Oh wayward ſorrow!
That wounds, yet wounding heals the lover.
[*Ex. amb.*

Scene changes—Lady SALISBURY reclining on a couch.

Enter ELEANOR.

ELEANOR.

Grief, that of Time's fix'd periods for repoſe
Takes ſmall account, hath lull'd her wearied ſenſes—
Where'er thou dwell'ſt, O Peace, with azure eye
Serene; or if in ſtately-ſtructur'd dome,
Or thatch-roof'd cottage low, or in cool grot
By fountain clear thou ſit'ſt, or if perchance
Along the ſilver brook's green liveried verge
Reclin'd, approach thou roſy-dimpled fair;
Leave thy ſweet haunts a while; and with that balm
Which ſooths the woe-ſtruck heart, await her ſlumbers.
The hour approaches, when, as is her cuſtom,
She ſeeks the hallow'd ſhrine, and pious wakes
The voice of pure devotion to high Heaven:
I'll thither, and expect her—but ſhe wakes—
How fares the miſtreſs of my beſt regards?
Proved her ſlumbers ſweet as were my wiſhes?

Lady

Lady SALISBURY.

Sweet, ſweet, my Eleanor; ſo ſweet, oh! would
I ne'er had wak'd. I dreamt, as wont on him
To dream, that I beheld his gracious form,
My boſom's lord; a while he ſtood, and ſeem'd
On me to ſmile, then flew to my embraces.——
Ah fleeting extacy! 'twas but a dream.

Enter a KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

Thy favour, lady; I am charg'd with news,
That much imports thy hearing: ſummon up
Thy powers; two ſtrangers late have come, of whom
One brings aſſured tidings of thy lord.

Lady SALISBURY.

——My lord——what——ſpeak——

KNIGHT.

He ſaith he knew my lord
Of Saliſbury well; that he was of his crew;
And with that peer embark'd from France.

Lady SALISBURY.

—But—well—from France.——

KNIGHT.

Lady, all muſt have
Their ſorrows. Strait uproſe a mighty tempeſt,
Diſpers'd the fleet o'er all the ſeas——
The ſtorm—the fatal wreck—of all
The ſtranger gives moſt circumſtantial proof.
[*Exit.*]

ELEANOR.

Alas the tidings!—Deareſt lady, give
Thy ſorrows vent; thy boſom's overfraught,
And will find eaſe by letting looſe its woes.

—We

Lady SALISBURY.

——Well, well——
Then he is loſt, and all, all is deſpair.
Tho' languid, yet was hope not quite extinct——
Where, where's the ſtranger? Seek him, haſte, that I
May hear him fully ſpeak of all. [*Ex.* Knt] Methinks
'Twill be a deſperate ſort of ſoothing; to hang
Upon each ſound, catch every circumſtance
Of the ſad ſtory, and wring my aching heart
Till I am even ſurfeited with ſorrow.

ELEANOR.

Behold, the ſtranger comes——

Enter ALWIN.

Lady SALISBURY.

Bear, bear me up, good Heaven!
That I may give full meaſure to my ſorrow.

ALWIN.

——Thy angel hover o'er thee, and ſupport thee.
[*In an under voice.*]

Lady SALISBURY.

——The dead ere now
Have burſt the priſons of the cloſe-pent grave,
And apparitions ſtrange of faith appear'd;
Perhaps thou too art but a ſhadow; let
Me graſp thee, for, as I have life, I think——
It is, it is my Saliſbury! O my lord!

Lord SALISBURY.

My boſom's joy!

Lady SALISBURY.

——And doſt thou live indeed?
Amazing Providence! He does! he does!
Look!

Look! look! behold him, Eleanor! behold
The gracious form! the viſion was not vain.
[Eleanor *goes aſide.*]

Lord SALISBURY.

—And art thou, art thou then—

Lady SALISBURY.

—O my full boſom!

Lord SALISBURY.

The ſame, by time or circumſtance unchang'd?

Lady SALISBURY.

Unhop'd reverſe!—Hence, hence all former woes—
My lord! my life! hence, hence, be ſwallow'd up
All griefs, and loſt in this moſt bliſsful hour.

Lord SALISBURY.

Thou art, I ſee, thou art the ſame, thou muſt;
Thou haſt not yielded to another lord?

Lady SALISBURY.

Another lord!—And cou'd you, did you think
'Twas ſo?

Lord SALISBURY.

Thus ſpoke loud rumour on my way:
Indeed I ſcarce cou'd think it.

Lady SALISBURY.

Oh! 'twas foul!
Indeed thou ſhould'ſt not think it—

Lord SALISBURY.

Ever dear!
No more; my ſoul is ſatisfied, and thinks
Of nothing now but happineſs and thee.

Lady

Lady SALISBURY.

Say then, thou wanderer—Oh! I have much
Of thee to aſk, thou much to hear: how is't
I ſee thee, ſee thee thus? Where haſt thou been?
What ſecret region hath ſo long detain'd thee?

Lord SALISBURY.

O thou! whoſe image, ever in my view,
Suſtain'd me angel-like againſt the rough
And rapid current of adverſity,
Shou'd I recount the ſtory of my fortunes,
Each circumſtance, beginning from that day
We parted, to this hour, thine ear wou'd be
Fatigu'd; the ſtars, ere I had ended, ceaſe
To twinkle; and the morning's ſun break in
Upon th' unfiniſh'd tale; ſuffice it thee
To know the ſumm.
For England we embark'd, when, black and foul,
A tempeſt riſing, quick upturn'd the ſeas,
And caſt me forth upon a hoſtile ſhore.
Why need I tell thee, love, how, in diſguiſe,
On foot, alone, I've toil'd my weary way,
Thro' dreary vale, o'er mountain wild; my bed
Oft of the blaſted heath, whilſt o'er my limbs
Dank night hath ſhaken her cold, dewy wings,
And the chill northern gale hath ſpent his breath
On my defenceleſs head?
Thro' what variety of ſtrange events
I've come, Heav'n-guided, to behold, once more,
My wife?—But, ah! my ſon! our only hope!
My boy! what, what of him?

Lady SALISBURY.

Dear to theſe eyes
As is the new-born light of Heav'n! he lives;
Is well—But ſay, my lord, what would thy coming
Thus unattended, thus diſguis'd!

Lord

Lord SALISBURY.

How I eſcap'd from hard captivity,
And Gallia's coaſt, more leiſure ſhall inform you.
My friend, ſir Ardolf, had but juſt embrac'd me,
(The firſt glad tranſports of our meeting o'er)
When, with an honeſt tear, the good old man
In brief diſclos'd what fame had now reported;
That thou wert ſoon, or had'ſt, ere this, eſpous'd
Earl Hubert's nephew, and ſole purpos'd heir—

Lady SALISBURY.

Oh moſt unhallow'd, thus t' abuſe
My unattainted love!—And cou'd my lord—

Lord SALISBURY.

Yet hear me—Strait I graſp'd my ſword;
And, ſingle as I was, had ſallied forth,
Had not my friend's ſage counſels interpos'd.
By Ardolf ſway'd, I veil'd me as thou ſee'ſt;
And, with a ſharer in the dark intent,
Set forward on my way for Sal'ſb'ry caſtle:
A ſimple Hind's low cottage, not far hence,
Receiv'd us. Here, faſt by the green-wood ſide,
We lodg'd; reſolv'd, ourſelves unknown, to prove
What doubtful rumour only had proclaim'd.
With this intent, at duſk of evening we
Forſook the cot—

Lady SALISBURY.

There needs no more: Heaven ſaw
Me, and was touch'd with pity—What a change
This hour! Sequeſter'd as I was, even like
The votariſt; perhaps the deſtin'd prey
Of rude deſire—

Sord SALISBURY.

O for to-morrow's ſlow returning night!

Lady SALISBURY.

Say, what of that, my lord?

Lord SALISBURY.

Revenge, revenge.
I'll tell thee—Soon as dark uſurping night,
Shall chace to-morrow's ſun adown the ſkies,
Know, Ardolf, with a choſen troop of friends,
To that ſame cottage, arm'd ſhall come—

Enter ELEANOR.

ELEANOR.

My lord, I hear th' approach of haſty ſteps.

Lord SALISBURY.

Farewell, my beſt:
Nor peace nor ſleep ſhall viſit me till I
Have given thee freedom, and reveng'd our wrongs.

Enter KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

Lord Raymond, ſir, forthwith expects your coming.

Lord SALISBURY.

I will attend him. Lady, fain wou'd I
Have told thee leſs ungracious things; but all
Have their appointed trials. Learn to bear;
Convinc'd, the hand of Heaven, when it inflicts,
Prepares us oft for ſome ſuperior good.
[*Ex. omnes.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE within the Caſtle.

Enter RAYMOND and GREY.

RAYMOND.

I SEE nor cauſe my joys to check, nor boaſt
As yet ſecurely.

GREY.

Think, that Hope, the young,
The merry-minded fair, exalts us oft,
To make our fall the greater.

RAYMOND.

Why this cold,
This prudent maxim?——

GREY.

Mark the wary falcon;
Forward he ſhoots his piercing eye, and kens
The quarry from afar; like his be thine——
Perhaps, my lord, mine are but nicer fears,
Wak'd in a heart o'er anxious of thy welfare:
Yet hath the younger of thoſe ſtrangers rais'd
In me ſuſpicions of alarming hue,
Leſt, underneath this honeſt guiſe, there lurk
Some ſubtile miſchief. Lady Saliſbury ſaw him:
Their conference, as 'twas long, ſo was it held
In ſecret; wou'd we had been preſent.

RAYMOND.

Granting
Our preſence had been ſeemly, wherefore ſpoke
You not this counſel ere they met?

GREY.

I ſaw not then the danger.
His honeſt carriage, and the recent change
Within her mind, had lull'd each nicer fear.

RAYMOND.

'Till now unmov'd, ſay what hath wak'd ſuſpicion?

GREY.

I know not well—wou'd ſhe were firmly thine,
Beyond the reach and graſp of wayward Fortune.
The Knight, whoſe office was to introduce
Him to the counteſs, he diſmiſs'd ere they
Approach'd th' apartment.

RAYMOND.

Indeed!

GREY.

This too—Is it not ſtrange, tho' night, and this
Thy proffer'd roof, invited his ſojourn,
He wou'd not wait th' approach of morning?

RAYMOND.

Are they gone?

GREY.

Amid the unguarded joy
Which held us, they eſcap'd, unheeded.

Enter Second KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

My lord,
Two ſtrangers, it is ſaid in Palmer's weeds
Attir'd,

Attir'd, have lodg'd ſince morning in a hut;
You may have mark'd it in the darkſome glen,
Near to the foreſt of wild oaks, juſt where
The ſtream white ruſhes down the ſhelving cliff.

RAYMOND.

Since morning ſay'ſt thou?

KNIGHT.

Further I have learn'd,
Their guiſe, as doth appear from certain words
O'erheard, is borrow'd with deſign to maſk
Some ſecret purpoſe. [*Exit.*

GREY.

It muſt be ſo;
Their cloſe-concerted arts have foil'd our caution.

RAYMOND.

They ſcarce have meaſur'd half the precincts yet,
Send forth my knights, we will purſue them.

GREY.

No: one way there is, and only one—But hence,
I hear the counteſs—She loves lord William well;
And much, much will a pious mother ſure,
To ſave an only ſon. [*Exeunt ambo.*]

Enter Lady SALISBURY and ELEANOR.

Lady SALISBURY.

In ſpite of this event, this bleſt event,
That hath reſtor'd the lord of this fond boſom,
Yet is my mind with doubts and fears diſturb'd;
With images and wild conceits, of form
Unſightly; ſuch as hover oft in dreams
About the curtains of the ſick—Alas!
Whilſt others joy within the friendly roof,
Of night regardleſs and the ſtorm that beats

Without, he ſtruggles hard; or be at beſt
To the dark ſhelter of the dripping wood.
Beſides what unknown perils may aſſail him,
Unaided thus, againſt whatever ill—
Wou'd he had waited the return of morn.

ELEANOR.

The night is dark indeed, the tempeſt high;
But hear me, lady, hear a pious leſſon,
Which thy own lips to me have oft repeated:
There is a power unſeen, whoſe charge it is,
With ever wakeful eye to watch the good;
And peaceful ever is that breaſt, which truſts
In his angelic guard—The hand
Of Heaven, that hitherto hath been his ſhield,
Will miniſter ſafe convoy to his ſteps,
Tho' night and darkneſs ſhed their thickeſt gloom.

Lady SALISBURY.

Miſdeem not of my fears; or think I ſpeak,
As over diffident of that ſame Power
Thou nam'ſt, whoſe all ſurveying eye wakes ever;
Clear, unobſtructed, either when the ſun
Shrowds in night's ſhadowy veil, or when at noon
He ſhines reveal'd on his meridian throne.
But where's the boſom throbs not, if it hope?
Hope ever is attended with a train
Of wakeful doubts; and where the ſweet nymph harbours,
There flutters alſo her pale ſiſter Fear—
But hence, as was our purpoſe, to the ſhrine;
Where, as is meet, for my dear lord reſtor'd
I will with grateful adoration——

Enter Lord WILLIAM.

Lord WILLIAM.

Mother—I fain would know that ſtranger, who
He is that juſt now met me.

Lady

Lady SALISBURY.

And wherefore would'ſt thou know him, love?

Lord WILLIAM.

Gentle he was, and mild; not like thoſe grim-fac'd ones I ſee here every day: and ſuch kind things he did, as make me love him dearly.

Lady SALISBURY.

Say, what were they?

Lord WILLIAM.

He kiſs'd me, ſtrok'd my head, and patted me upon the cheek, and ſaid——

Lady SALISBURY.

What ſaid, he, ſweet?

Lord WILLIAM.

He ſaid——Heaven bleſs thy beauteous head, ſweet boy.

Enter GREY.

GREY.

Permit me, honour'd dame, I have a word
Or two, that claims thine ear.

Lady SALISBURY.

Then but a word;
My preſent cares ill brook long interruption.

GREY.

Behold the bloſſom of the ſpring, how fair!
Yet in his velvet boſom lurks the worm,
And hourly waſtes him of his choiceſt ſweets;
Not leſs a foe is ſlow-conſuming grief
To beauty——
You may remember, when we laſt conferr'd,
The gracious purport of your words to what
Concern'd

Concern'd lord Raymond, when you taught his ſuit
To hope a proſperous iſſue; thus by me he ſpeaks;
In the receſs of the hallow'd ſhrine,
Where with him ſtands the ſable veſted prieſt,
He waits thy coming; there with pious vows
Exchang'd even now to conſecrate thee his.
May every roſe-lip'd ſon of light look down,
And ſmile propitious on the joyful hour!

Lady SALISBURY.

Is this a ſeaſon meet for ſuch a theme?

GREY.

For gracious acts all ſeaſons ſhould be meet;
Heaven ſhews the bright example; ever prompt
T' incline when virtue lifts her ſuppliant eye.
But ſay, that for the preſent he forebore
His earneſt ſuit, ſay, ſhall to-morrow make
Him happy? or to-morrow's night perchance?
Or—what ſhall be the bright ſucceeding day?

Lady SALISBURY.

I know not; nor will I ſubmit me or
To promis'd league or tye; no, tho' thou ſhouldſt plead
Even with an angel's tongue.

GREY.

You will not, lady!
Know then this night, this hour muſt make thee his.

Lady SALISBURY.

This night! this hour! who'll make me his this hour?

GREY.

A power, my lady, thou ſhalt learn to fear;
Force, Force ſuperior, that with giant hand
Plucks e'en the monarch from his throne; diſrobes

The virgin of her honour, while Diſtreſs
With ſtreaming eyes and looſe diſhevel'd hair
Holds forth her ſupplicating hands in vain.

Lady SALISBURY.

I know the monſter thou woud'ſt fright me with,
But I deſpiſe his power—Haſt thou ne'er heard?
Learn then of me a truth, a golden truth,
Grav'd on the regiſters of hoary Time:
Virtue, with her own native ſtrength upheld,
Can brave the ſhock of ruffian force, unmov'd
As is the rock, whoſe firm ſet baſe not all
The tumult of the weſtern ſurge can ſhake,
Tho' the fierce winds uplift him to the ſtars.

GREY.

This is a truth indeed may hold a place
On Fancy's tinſel page, what will avail
Thy virtue's boaſted powers when thou ſhalt ſee
Torn from thy feeble arms all thou holdeſt dear;
Yes, lady, thy lord William, thy lov'd ſon?

Lady SALISBURY.

—Ha! ſave him Heaven! He dare not ſure—
and yet—

GREY.

Think, lady, think upon thy ſon.

Lady SALISBURY.

Protect
Him, O ye powers celeſtial, angels watch
His ſteps, and hover round his harmleſs head!

GREY.

Say, will you to the altar, lady?

Lady SALISBURY.

Sooner to my grave.

GREY.

Thy obſtinacy on his head—Who waits?

Enter a RUFFIAN.

Lady SALISBURY.

What would'ſt thou here? Hence, execrable wretch!
Thou makeſt my blood run cold.

Lord WILLIAM.

Oh mother! I am frighten'd.

Lady SALISBURY.

Deareſt lamb!
Haſt thou no terrors for thyſelf?—Oh Saliſbury!—
Haſt thou no fears?—Oh! I cou'd tell thee what
Like thunder wou'd apal thy hearing, ſhrink
Up every nerve within thy blaſted frame,
And make thee nothing.—Fear not, love.

GREY.

Think not
With empty ſounds to ſhake our purpoſe, ſay,
Will you comply?

Lady SALISBURY.

My little innocent!
Thou dar'ſt not, fell as is thy nature.—My love!
My life!

GREY.

Convey lord William hence.

Lord WILLIAM.

Oh! ſave me, mother, ſave me.

Lady SALISBURY.

Forbear your impious hands, forbear.

GREY.

GREY.

Or to the altar, or by all therein
I ſwear, this moment wreſts him from thy view.

Lady SALISBURY.

Inhuman that thou art! can nothing move
Thee?—Oh! thoſe little harmleſs looks wou'd preach
Even to the hungry lion, make him pauſe,
And turn his rage to pity.

GREY.

Nay, madam—

Lady SALISBURY.

Forbear, and I will go,—whither?
Diſtraction! I will rouze
The caſtle—help—my cries ſhall tear the roofs.
Help, help, Oh help!—the mother and the ſon.

GREY.

Your cries are vain—

Enter Lord SALISBURY.

Lord SALISBURY.

Hold!—what is't ye do?

GREY.

He here again!

Lord SALISBURY.

Speak, lady, would theſe men have wrong'd thee?
Pale fear is on thy cheek—
[Eleanor *removes lord* William. *Exit* Grey *and* Ruffian.]

Lady SALISBURY.

Cold horror hath o'ercome me.

Lord SALISBURY.

Ever lov'd!
Sure thou wert ſore diſtreſs'd, I heard thee cry.

Lady SALISBURY.

Ah ſore diſtreſs'd indeed! the hand of Peril
Was on me; Violence and Murder ſtar'd
Me full in all their hideous forms!

Lord SALISBURY.

Gracious powers! my fear, my fear, new-wak'd,
For thee it was, as Heaven decreed, that urg'd
Me back, and brought me to thy timely reſcue.

Lady SALISBURY.

'Twas Heaven indeed that brought thee hither now!
Yet I have wonderous fears: thou art but one,
Surrounded by a legion of thoſe fiends.

RAYMOND, GREY and armed KNIGHTS.

RAYMOND as he enters.

Where is the audacious man that hath preſum'd
To queſtion with ſuch bold intruſion?

Lord SALISBURY.

If him you mean,
Who took the part of feeble innocence
Againſt the ruffian's arm,—he's here.

RAYMOND.

Which of you, ſlaves, have ſuffer'd him to enter?

KNIGHT.

My lord, he bad us to unbar the gates,
Driven by the tempeſt, as he ſaid, to ſeek
The proffer'd ſhelter he had late declin'd:
Pardon, if deeming him your honoured gueſt,
We anſwer'd him with prompt compliance.

RAY-

RAYMOND.

Say what dark purpoſe is't hath brought thee hither?
Confeſs thee true, or by the bleſſed Saints
Thou ſhalt have cauſe to mourn the hour which mov'd
Thee, daring as thou art, t' approach our caſtle.

Lord SALISBURY.

To other regions, other climes with threats
Like theſe, where proud Oppreſſion lords it: here
The free-born ſubject knows not what it is
To be in awe of arbitrary power.

RAYMOND.

I will know what thou art.

Lord SALISBURY.

Even what thou ſeeſt
Am I; a man not prompt to offer wrong,
Yet of that frame, I brook not to behold
A noble lady made the prey of ruffians.

RAYMOND.

Intruder, bold as thou art officious, wherefore
Should'ſt thou concern thee in this lady's cauſe?

Lord SALISBURY.

The cauſe of innocence ſhould be the cauſe
Of all—Confeſs thee, lord, was't nobly done,
To let thoſe bold, thoſe rude aſſailants looſe,
And give a ſanction to ſuch foul proceedings?

RAYMOND.

Pilgrim, haſt thou forgot thee? Who am I?

Lord SALISBURY.

Who art thou? Aſk, aſk thy deeds,
And they will anſwer. The breath of Fame hath told
How

How baſe they have been; they are gone abroad,
And the pure air is tainted with their foulneſs.

RAYMOND.

Preſuming ſlave! whoe'er thou art, for thy
Unlicenc'd bearing dearly ſhalt thou anſwer.
Hence with the bold defamer; bind him faſt;
Be inſtant death his lot ſhould he reſiſt—
Seize him, I ſay.

Lady SALISBURY.

Oh ſpare him, ſpare—

Lord SALISBURY.

Out, ſervile miniſters!
Ye know not who it is ye wou'd attempt—
Oppreſſive lord! whom nor the ſacred bond
Of juſtice, nor of hoſpitality
Controls, regard me: while with ſight
More dire than e'er of Gorgon feign'd, I ſtrike thee—
Now, Raymond, if thou haſt of noble fire
One ſpark within thee, draw thy ſword; come on,
And meet my arm; wake all that's man within thee.
Come on—— [*Flings off his diſguiſe.*]
'Tis Sal'ſbury, Sal'ſbury, calls thee to the ſtrife.

Lady SALISBURY.

Heaven ſhield my deareſt lord!

RAYMOND.

——Saliſbury! then what am I?—

Lord SALISBURY.

Vengeance at length is arm'd; thy fate cries out,
And honour, injured honour, claims aloud
Her victim.

RAY-

RAYMOND.

—Secure thou ſeem'ſt of Fate, but fall who will
A victim, let the ſword— [*Drawing.*]

GREY.

What would you do?—
[*Aſide. Holding his arm.*]
Look not to know him, all may yet be well—
Be not abus'd, my lord: this is a plot,
Devis'd with purpoſe to effect thy ruin.

Lord SALISBURY.

Ha! what do'ſt ſay?

GREY.

Believe him not, my lord. He! he lord Saliſbury!
'Tis all a trick, an artful cheat, and he
A lyar trac'd—

Lord SALISBURY.

Nay then my ſword—
—Diſhoneſt knights! [*Going to attack* Raymond, *he is diſarmed.*]

Lady SALISBURY.

Now by theſe tears do him no violence;
He is, is my huſband.

GREY.

Regard her not:
He hath conſpir'd againſt thee, and demands
The hand of juſtice.

Lord SALISBURY.

Will ye not ope, ye Heavens, and inſtant ſend
Your thunder to my aid?—Unhand me villians,
Or, by the powers of vengeance, I will daſh
You piece-meal.

RAYMOND.

Bear the traitor hence, and bind
His ſtubborn arms: beſtow the lady ſafe
Within her chamber.

Lady SALISBURY.

I will not part my huſband—Hold your hands—
They overpower me—Barbarous, barbarous men!

Lord SALISBURY.

Ruffians forbear your more than impious hands.

Lady SALISBURY.

Yet hear me, Raymond—by theſe ſtreaming eyes,
Oh! hear me yet—

RAYMOND.

Away—

Lord SALISBURY.

Slaves! murderers!
[*They are forced off ſeverally.*]

RAYMOND.

Away with him, away—honour is loſt,
And ſhame muſt henceforth be my only portion.
[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV.

Enter RAYMOND and GREY.

MY lord, you waſte the precious hours in cold
Irreſolute delays: nor circumſtance
Nor time admit of long deliberation.

RAYMOND.

—Wou'd I had never ſeen this fatal manſion!

GREY.

A ſorry wiſh, my lord. Behold the fierce,
The lordly ranger of the deſert wild;
No ſluggiſh fears he knows; he pauſes not,
Nor looks behind, but onward ſpeeds him till
He gripes the trembling prey: be ever thus
The youth, whom thirſt of love and beauty fires.

RAYMOND.

—Away; call forth my train—nay murmur not:
Command that ere the lark proclaim the morn
They hold them each prepar'd. Here I will reſt,
If reſt I can, this night; to-morrow's ſun
Shall ſee me fled for ever from theſe walls.

GREY.

——Go——I detain thee not.
Summon thy train, mount the ſwift ſteed, away;
The gates ſhall open to thy flight—but know,
That ſhame and ſcorn ſhall follow at thy heels.
Yet worſe; the inſulted baron next purſues thee:
Nor rocks, nor mountains, nor oppoſing ſeas
Shall ſtay him; but with more than mortal rage
He ſhall aſſail thee.

RAYMOND.

—Are there no other means?

GREY.

None.

RAYMOND.

No other way but murder? Horrid thought!—
Oh! Grey, if e'er the dagger's drawn I feel
Such perturbation here!—what then, oh what
Shall prove my portion when 'tis ſteep'd in blood?
The drops can from the point be wip'd away,
But never from the mind.

GREY.

Lift, lift thine eye,
And let it gaze upon the bright reward.
Riches and honours grace the ſwelling act,
While Beauty, like the ruby-crowned morn,
When firſt ſhe peers upon the mountain top,
Comes ſmiling on to meet you—Theſe are objects,
My lord, would irritate the palſied arm
Itſelf of Fear; excite the lagging blood,
And ſpur it on to acts of noble daring.

RAYMOND.

What wou'd you do?—Think—Saliſbury is a name
Of all belov'd, of more than vulgar ſway
Throughout the land; a deed unauthoriz'd
As this ſhall never 'ſcape the arm of juſtice.

GREY.

Such wary counſels ſhall our ſteps o'er-rule
As may deride ſuſpicion—One there is,
A Knight among thy vaſſal train perhaps
Unnoted: ſoft of ſpeech he is, and fair;
But of a heart that mocks at human feelings:
Him I have ſounded with reſerve; and find
Him not unapt to this our ſecret purpoſe—

But ſay, what recompenſe, what high reward
Awaits the man, whoſe arm for thee enacts
Such ſignal ſervice?

RAYMOND.

'Half my fortunes, all
Wou'd I on him beſtow, whoſe proſperous arts
Shou'd make the fair one mine.

GREY.

She ſhall be thine.

RAYMOND.

But ſay, my friend, what tale, what rare device
Shou'd fruitful art explore that might amuſe
Her juſt ſuſpicions?

GREY.

Innocence, the maſk
Of innocence, and counterfeited ſorrow—

Enter ELEANOR.

ELEANOR.

If beauty in diſtreſs, if dignity
Now ſinking into ruin can aſſail
Thy pity, come, oh! come, and weep to ſee—

GREY.

The counteſs, I ſuppoſe.

ELEANOR.

My lord, my lord,
'Twou'd melt the ſavage into human ſoftneſs,
And make him howl forth pity to behold her—
Oh! did you ſee her, pale, diſorder'd as
She runs, now calling wildly on her lord,
Again upon her ſon, again on thee.
Sometimes, alas! ſhe beats her beauteous boſom;

Anon in frantic mood tears from her head
The ſilken hairs, which fall in heaps unheeded;
Wrings her white hands, and weeps and raves by turns,
Till nature ſpent and wearied gives her pauſe.

RAYMOND.

Away—we will ſpeak comfort to her ſorrows.
[*Exit* Eleanor.]
—Wretch that I am!—But I will yield them up;
Son, huſband, all I will reſign, if ſo
I may appeaſe her phrenzy.
[*Going, is detained by* Grey.]

GREY.

Be not raſh.
Short is the date of every ſtronger paſſion;
Unſtay'd the mind of woman; by a breath
Oft agitated, by a breath compos'd—
Yield them, my lord! it wou'd be madneſs, ruin.

RAYMOND.

Which ever way I turn, it is deſtruction.

GREY.

O'ercaſt with fear, thine eye takes nothing in
But fancies of the ſickliеſt hue—For ſhame,
Rouſe, rouſe my noble lord; awake, ſhake off
This weakneſs. Pleaſure muſt be woo'd with toil,
Go to her, ſolace her; if that ſhou'd fail,
Permit her as by ſtealth to viſit Saliſbury;
At ſight of him this tumult ſhall ſubſide.

RAYMOND.

With love and pity I am torn. In vain
I ſtrive; too far I am advanc'd in error.
Oh! will no hand diſcloſe a path whereby
I may return?—Accurs'd be thou, myſelf;
And doubly be accurs'd that fatal hour
I turn'd mine ear to thy deſtructive counſels.
[*Goes out in great agitation.*

GREY *alone.*

——My hopes begin to totter.
If he reſign them, Saliſbury is appeas'd,
And he retires: what then becomes of Grey?
On me, on me of courſe the tempeſt falls.
That muſt not be—He goes to ſee her now—
Who knows what new-ſprung hope may follow thence?
There is a charm in ſoft diſtreſs, that works
Upon the ſoul like magic; cauſing love
Oft times, as oft exciting looſe deſire—
It is moſt apt. I will, before he goes
To her, explore each acceſs to his heart;
Attack each avenue that leads to virtue;
Try every mining art that may aſſiſt
The looſe contagion: Shou'd he ſeize her beauties,
Farewel remorſe; then dies the injur'd huſband.
[*Exit.*

Scene opening, diſcovers lord SALISBURY on the ground, in chains.

Enter LEROCHES.

LEROCHES.

Alas! on the cold ground. I fear his wrongs
Have made him mad; I heard him rage—My lord—
Riſe, riſe, my lord, and ſpeak to thy Leroches.

Lord SALISBURY.

—Thou art unkind.

LEROCHES.

Oh! wou'd to Heaven that I cou'd eaſe thy troubles!

Lord SALISBURY.

I had in ſweet oblivion loſt myſelf
And every care; why haſt thou call'd me back
To hated recollection?—O my wrongs!

My

My wrongs! they now come ruſhing o'er my head--
Again, again, they wake me into madneſs.

LEROCHES.

Thy wrongs ſhall be reveng'd.

Lord SALISBURY.

Torn from them both!
——Let me not think.

LEROCHES.

Think on our friends, my lord:
Perhaps even now they are at hand; and ſoon
Will thunder at the gates.

Lord SALISBURY.

Is't poſſible?
Or do my eyes but falſe perſuade me to it?—
In trammels! and within my walls! beneath
That roof where I am ſole-inveſted lord!—

LEROCHES.

Look, behold.

Lord SALISBURY.

I ſee; thou art diſhonour'd.

LEROCHES.

'Tis the will
Of Heaven, and I ſubmit me to my fortunes.

Lord SALISBURY.

How cam'ſt thou hither?

LEROCHES.

By command, as I
Suppoſe, of—but I will not name him.

Lord

Lord SALISBURY.

Blaſts
Upon him!—Didſt thou ſee my wife?

LEROCHES.

No, my lord.

Lord SALISBURY.

Nor my ſon?

LEROCHES.

My lord I ſaw not either.

Lord SALISBURY.

Nor of either heard?

LEROCHES.

No, my good lord;—I truſt that they are ſafe.

Lord SALISBURY.

Hear me, ſweet Heaven! ye throned powers above,
Dread arbiters of mortal doings, hear—
Dry not inſtant up the ſprings of life,
But grant me meaſure of revenge. Unbind,
For pity theſe diſhonour'd limbs unbind,
And give this monſter to my willing arm:
If I not firmly gripe, if I not tear
With more than ſavage force his hated form—

Enter a KNIGHT.

Traitor!
What haſt thou done? Bring forth my honour'd dame—
Haſte, bring her inſtant; give her to my arms,
Uninjur'd, undefil'd, or by the ſouls
Of the moſt holy and unſpotted ſaints—
Spare me, good Heaven—I am, I am to blame—
Imports thy coming aught with me?

KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

Behold
In me thy better angel, come to warn
Thee of unguarded danger—Oh my lord!
My lord! beware of horrid treachery—
Whatever knight thou not'ſt, that traitor like
Approacheth thee with ſmiles; that with the charm
Of honey'd ſpeech would practice on thy hearing.
Of him beware—They ſeek thy ruin; chance
Betray'd their purpoſe; I was touch'd with pity.
[*Going.*]

Lord SALISBURY.

Nay, go not yet.

KNIGHT.

Suſpicion's on the watch;
My thoughts are ſcarce my own.

Lord SALISBURY.

It is for Guilt,
Not conſcious Honeſty, to taſte of fear.

KNIGHT.

Know then, my lord, tho' ſtrict neceſſity
Enrolls me in the liſt of Raymond's train
Yet doth my ſoul abhor the unhallow'd ſervice.

Lord SALISBURY.

Be thou but faithful, and diſcover all
Thou know'ſt, ſo ſhalt thou thrive in Saliſbury's favour.

KNIGHT.

Fear not my faith. But ſhall lord Saliſbury prove
A friend indeed? for I ſhall need thy arm
And intereſt both againſt ſo great a foe.

Lord

Lord SALISBURY.

Now by my honour, ever yet held dear,
I will protect thee 'gainſt whatever foe.

KNIGHT.

Morton deſires but this—Know then, that late
As by the weſtern porch I ſtood, my ear
Was met by certain voices: ſtrait I turn'd;
And thro' the crevice of th' adjoining door
Was known that ſame inſidious knight and Grey,
In low, but earneſt converſe. Thee they nam'd:
And I cou'd hear the latter, whilſt he ſaid,
"A dagger is the beſt. With honeſt ſmiles,
"And fair-inſtructed ſpeech you muſt eſſay him.
"Thy peace and fortunes on this feat depend."

Lord SALISBURY.

I thank thee for this warning; and ere long
Shall recompenſe thy love.

MORTON.

Had I the power
To ſerve thee, as the will, thou ſhould'ſt not wear
Thoſe marks of ſhame—But oh! the unhappy
counteſs!

Lord SALISBURY.

What, what of her?

MORTON.

Alas! to think the pangs
She feels this moment, torn as ſhe hath been
By rude barbarians from her lord and ſon.

Lord SALISBURY.

But is ſhe ſafe? hath not diſhonour reach'd her?

MORTON.

Oh may ſhe never know diſhonour!—Yet
Lord Raymond——

Lord SALISBURY.

Periſh the deteſted name
For ever! for it makes my blood outcourſe
The wholeſome ſpeed of nature.

MORTON.

It is true,
He holds her in his power—

Lord SALISBURY.

He does, he does;
And I do live to know it.

MORTON.

But I truſt
He will not uſe that power—Farewel, my lord;
I will away, and gather all I can
Of their condition.

Lord SALISBURY.

Thou ſhalt win my love.
See, ſee my wife, oh! ſee her if thou can'ſt:
Speak comfort to her. Say the only pangs I feel
Are for her ſafety. Bid her hope for timely aid;
But to remember ſtill, the virtuous mind
Will welcome death itſelf before diſhonour.

MORTON.

To ſee her, is a taſk I fear will foil
My utmoſt; but no art ſhall be untried.
[*Exit* MORTON.

Lord SALISBURY.

Is there no way to freedom?—Oh my friends!
My friends! Haſte, Ardolf, haſte to my revenge.

LEROCHES.

LEROCHES.

Thy fierce impatience, thy untoward will
It is, my lord, that hath betray'd our ſafeties.
To Ardolf deaf, thou would'ſt not wait his ſuccours;
Deaf too to me, thou would'ſt approach the caſtle.

Lord SALISBURY.

Fear not: this ſtranger, like Heav'n's brighter ſtar,
Hath riſen propitious—Heav'ns! but what of that?
My wife!—perhaps even now within the gripe
Of fell incontinence ſhe ſtruggles—Beware
That thought—down, down, or I ſhall rage to madneſs.

LEROCHES.

My lord, he wou'd not—

Lord SALISBURY.

Hark!—

LEROCHES.

He wou'd not, dare not, ſure: or if he dare,
Her inborn dignity, her virtue—

Lord SALISBURY.

Peace!—

Lady SALISBURY.

Hold off your brutal hands! [*from without.*

Lord SALISBURY.

'Tis ſhe! 'tis ſhe!
The ſlave aſſails her—Let me forth—
Slaves! murderers! inſtant let me forth, or I——

Lady SALISBURY.

Haſt thou no touch of pity?

Lord SALISBURY.

Horror! horror!
Out hair! out by the roots! nor let a grain
Be left to tell there grew ſuch honours there.

Lady SALISBURY.

O my lord! my lord!—

Lord SALISBURY.

By Heav'n I will not be reſtrain'd—
[LERO. *ſtrives to ſtay him.*
Nor all your bolts, nor barriers, all the pow'rs
Of hell united ſhall withhold me from her—

LEROCHES.

Preſerve him, Heaven! I fear
Some act of horrid import—Oh! ſhe comes!
Wild, wild as the rough ocean vex'd with ſtorms.
[*Burſts forth.*]

Enter Lady SALISBURY, ELEANOR, MORTON.

Lady SALISBURY.

I will have vengeance. Such an outrage—No,
I will not weep. They think I have no means:
'Tis falſe: I will reſume a ſpirit.

ELEANOR.

Alas! alas!

Lady SALISBURY.

I had a ſon; ſweet William! thou haſt heard
Him prattle: there was muſic on his tongue.

ELEANOR.

Can Heav'n behold ſuch crimes, and not awake
It's thunders?

Lady SALISBURY.

Weep'ſt thou? I can weep myſelf;
I have ſome cauſe—He is my huſband, who
Will

Will part us?—Cold, cold, cold. The rains beat ſore,
And the winds make a noiſe; 'tis a rough night;
No little ſtar to guide his darkling ſteps—
The Heav'ns do rain down pity for me.

ELEANOR.

Rave
Not thus, dear lady; oh! be comforted.

Lady SALISBURY.

Yes, yes; I know: theſe trifles have diſturb'd me.
The bird is riſl'd.
Poor flutterer! oh! it was nought to ſpoil
Her of her little hope—Did'ſt thou not ſee
Her valiant mate, how fierce he ſhook his plumes,
And peck'd at them? Did he not?—He had ſav'd
His miſtreſs from the ſpoilers, but they ſnar'd him.

Lord SALISBURY *entering.*

Where is the ſlave? I will not brook delay.

Lady SALISBURY.

He's come! he's come—Now, ruffians, I have found
Him, we will die together e'er you part us.

Lord SALISBURY.

Hell! what are your blackeſt horrors to this?

Lady SALISBURY.

We will have juſtice—Bury Grey alive.

Lord SALISBURY.

She's loſt!

Lady SALISBURY.

Say you!—Put Raymond to the torture.

Lord

Lord SALISBURY.

I will tear him joint by joint.

Lady SALISBURY.

But they will part us—
They come—You ſhall not—no; no pow'r on earth
Shall force me—Now they pull—Hold, hold, my lord—
Yet cloſer—now, now, now.

Lord SALISBURY.

My wife, my Ela!
Loſt as thou art, oh! do not leave me.

MORTON.

Diſtreſsful ſight!—Oh moſt inhuman Grey!

ELEANOR.

Nature, my lord, unequal to the conflict,
Has for a ſpace retir'd within herſelf;
But ſhortly to return. This interval
Of death-like quiet will, I truſt, recal
Her ſafer ſenſes—She revives.

Lady SALISBURY.

But this is ſtrange—

ELEANOR.

My lord,
Speak to her; ſooth her, and ſhe will be calm.

Lord SALISBURY.

Speak to her, ſooth her—what have I with her? with thee?
Oh agonizing hour! Had I but periſh'd
In the ſame wave that buried my lov'd friends,
It had been well—'Twas cruelty to ſave me.

Lady

Lady SALISBURY.

Am I indeed awake?—Let me ſtand up—
What is the matter?

Lord SALISBURY.

My poor, injur'd wife!

Lady SALISBURY.

Nay, but inform me, I am overdoubtful;
I wou'd believe, I know—if what I now
Behold, be not a dream, you are my huſband.

Lord SALISBURY.

The wretch that was ſo call'd.

Lady SALISBURY.

Alack! alack!
Sure I have been afflicted ſore—My lord!
My life!—why doſt thou ſtart from me?—Oh take
Me to thy arms! for I have need of comfort.

Lord SALISBURY.

Art thou not undone?

Lady SALISBURY.

Indeed I have wept.

Lord SALISBURY.

Loſt, ſtain'd, diſhonour'd by a villain?

Lady SALISBURY.

How,
My lord! Think'ſt thou that I have other wrongs
To weep than thou haſt ſeen?

Lord SALISBURY.

I heard thee cry.

Lady SALISBURY.

I know not what I did—Diſhonour'd!—O!
The thought wakes every pulſe to indignation.

Lord SALISBURY.

What! did he not aſſail thee?

Lady SALISBURY.

No—Aſſail me!

Lord SALISBURY.

Then art thou ſafe, thy honour unaſſay'd?

Lady SALISBURY.

So witneſs Heaven!

Lord SALISBURY.

The God of Heaven be prais'd!

Lady SALISBURY.

—And coud'ſt thou think ſo meanly of me?—Oh!
I had let the life-blood from this boſom forth
Ere I had brook'd diſhonour.

Lord SALISBURY.

Beſt of thy ſex!—Thy cries like daggers pierc'd me;
And fearful fancy pictur'd ſuch a ſcene
As hurried me to madneſs—But thou art ſafe,
My wife is ſafe! and I am bleſt again.

Lady SALISBURY.

My heart o'erjoys—Then wherefore do I fear?

Lord SALISBURY.

I had forgot—our ſon; for him thou fear'ſt.

Lady SALISBURY.

Not only for my ſon, but for thyſelf,
Thy precious ſelf I tremble—Oh this fiend!

The ſlaves and agents of deſtruction, black
And bold, are ſtation'd round him, and but wait
Their maſter's nod.

LEROCHES.

Wou'd we were ſafe beſtow'd
Without this fearful priſon!

Lady SALISBURY.

Wou'd we were!—
Think, think, my lord, is there no way to flight?

Lord SALISBURY.

Thou haſt recall'd to my remembrance what,
If ſeconded by this our plighted friend,
May claim a ſerious and attentive hearing.

MORTON.

Small is the ſervice I can boaſt my lord;
In all my beſt I ſhall be prompt to aid you.

Lord SALISBURY.

Hear then—Deep underneath this vaulted ground,
Curious and cloſe, by our forefathers ſcoop'd,
I do remember me there is a dark,
And ſecret mine, which leads by many a maze
Without the caſtle. Not far thence there ſtands
Within the boſom of an aged grove,
An houſe for pious uſes ſet apart,
The hallow'd ſeat of godly brethren: there
I fear not we ſhall reſt ſecure of ill.

Lady SALISBURY.

Moſt opportune as could our wiſhes frame—
But oh! our little hope! our younger care!

MORTON.

My life ſhall anſwer for lord William's ſafety.

Lady SALISBURY.

Then let us forth.

MORTON.

The night is over young;
The caſtle's yet awake, and wou'd but mock
The attempt.

Lord SALISBURY.

Say, what ſhall be the appointed hour?

MORTON.

Some three hours hence, my lord; or ere the clock
Perchance have told the ſecond watch—And now
That ſquint ſuſpicion mar not, let us part.

Lady SALISBURY.

Then muſt we part?—But 'tis to ſave us all.
Three hours—farewel!—Oh! they will be three long,
Long hours to me.

Lady SALISBURY.

Farewel my beſt!—Mean time
Leroches, we will reſt us here apart—Farewel,
Farewel! thou ſoother ſweet of every care!
The god, that loves the unſullied mind, deſcend,
And be thy guardian till we meet again.

[*Ex. omnes.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE a Foreſt, and Cottage.

Enter ARDOLF and a KNIGHT.

ARDOLF.

THE ſtorm is laid; and from the parting clouds
See where the moon ſteps forth, pale goddeſs,
Chearing the dark dull brow of haggard night—
This is the Foreſt, that the Cottager's,
Or I do err, th' appointed place of meeting.

KNIGHT.

It is: behold the Rock, as was deſcrib'd,
The torrent foaming down his rugged ſide.

ARDOLF.

See, the bright harbinger of morning climbs
The ſteep of Heaven: they're in the firſt repoſe—
Wake, peaſant, wake—How balmy ſweet the ſleep
Of him, who ſtretches under ruſtic roof!
His taſk of labour o'er, content he lays
Him on his ruſhy couch; nor elves, nor goblins,
The coinage of ſwol'n ſurfeit or of guilt,
Approach his peaceful pillow—Wake, I ſay;
Peaſant, awake.

Enter a PEASANT from the cottage.

PEASANT.

Who calls?
What is your buſineſs, that at this late hour
You make the Foreſt echoe with your cries?

ARDOLF.

Peaſant, are there not certain travellers
Within thy cottage?

PEASANT.

No.

ARDOLF.

What! ſaw you not
Two ſtranger pilgrims paſs this way?

PEASANT.

I did.
Two ſuch arrived e'er the lark had riſen
From her moſs cabin, or the cock
Gave note of morn.

ARDOLF.

Say, gentle cottager,
Where may they now be lodg'd?

PEASANT.

Nay, ſtranger, that
I know not. They went hence about the time
The bat begins her twilight play.

ARDOLF.

'Tis ſtrange
They ſhou'd depart—Left they no meſſage?

PEASANT.

None.
They ſaid, they wiſh'd to ſee the neighbouring Abbey;
But wou'd to-night partake our homely fare.
[*Returns into the cottage.*

ARDOLF.

We now are in the precincts of the caſtle;
But whether to proceed, or wait, perchance
If they return, I know not—Hark! ſome one
Approaches—who is there?

Enter

Enter LEROCHES.

Leroches!

LEROCHES.

Happily met—where are your friends?

ARDOLF.

At hand; and well appointed each—where is my Lord?

LEROCHES.

In chains; in his own caſtle baſely bound;
Torn from his wife and ſon—How I eſcap'd—
But haſte; time is too precious now for more:
His life hangs upon each eventful moment.

ARDOLF.

In chains! his life in danger!—Ho! my friends!
To horſe, quick; we will reſcue him, or periſh.

LEROCHES.

Ardolf, purſue the eaſtern cauſeway you;
I with a choſen few will trace the path,
Which led me from the poſtern.

ARDOLF.

Wiſely caution'd:
Divided thus, we wage an eaſier war.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE within the Caſtle.

Enter GREY and MORTON.

GREY.

My truſty Morton! well haſt thou repaid
The nicer hope which I repos'd in thee.
—Their unprovided reſt outruns my wiſhes.

MORTON.

Fools! not to ſee thro' my hypocriſy:
That in the borrow'd guiſe of honeſt friendſhip,
I ſtudied but to lure them to my toils—
Conceal'd from upper light, it yields a ſafe
Retreat; through that they purpos'd their eſcape.

GREY.

Within the ſecret womb of that ſame vault,
When all the caſtle's huſh'd, their bleeding trunks
We will depoſit.

MORTON.

Yes—we will be bloody.

GREY.

Here is the weapon—Be firm, and proſper.
[Morton *receives a dagger and goes out.*
——Thou too, unthinking fool, muſt this hour bleed—
Wou'd it were over—they may chance to wake—
Thou Sleep! ſtill child of ſable-hooded Night,
Befriend us. From thy dark Lethean cell
Upconjure all thy ſtore of drowſy charms;
Lock faſt their lids, o'erpower each torpid ſenſe,
That they awake not e'er the deed be done—
[*Bell tolls.*
—The ſecond watch; and like death's curfew, deep
And diſmal verberates the ſolemn knell.

Enter a KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

A ſtranger, ſir, who calls him Oſwald, waits
Without the caſtle, and wou'd ſpeak with you.

GREY.

Oſwald! He is our friend.

KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

I have not learn'd
His errand, but as it wou'd ſeem, he comes
With news that much imports thy preſent hearing.

GREY.

I'll ſpeak with him anon.

KNIGHT.

I know not what
Their purpoſe, but even now, as on the tower
I ſtood, which high o'erlooks the eaſtern cauſeway,
Methought I heard the diſtant ſound of horſe,
As hither bent in full career.

GREY.

The ſound
Of horſe!—Look out; call up our knights; away. [*Exit* KNIGHT.
—What can delay him?—Should my preſent hopes
Miſcarry, I will bear the lady hence,
And make her hoſtage for my ſafety; nay,
Perchance, what I have ſome incentives to,
Supplant them both, the lover and the huſband—
He comes!—

Re-enter MORTON.

MORTON.

Oh! that the earth wou'd yawn and cover me!
Or that Heaven's quick-devouring fires had ſhrunk
And wither'd up this arm when it was rais'd—
Eyes; eyes! why clos'd you not e'er you beheld
The ghaſtly ruin?

GREY.

Speak direct; are they diſpos'd?

MORTON.

MORTON.

Away—thou haſt deſtroy'd my peace for ever—
Had you beheld him as he lay, ſtruggling
In the cold gripe of death; his cheek o'erſpread
With livid pale; thoſe eyes, that late ſhot forth
So radiant, now quite ſunk; their burning lamps
Extinct; while from the deep-mouth'd wound,
As from a copious fountain, iſſued forth
Life's purple ſprings—
I wou'd have fled, but horror for a ſpace
Suſpended every power.

GREY.

'Tis well—
Haſt thou then ſlain Lord Saliſbury?
At thy own peril be it—Help! he has ſlain
The innocent!
They're murder'd, foully murder'd by a ſlave. [*Exit.*

MORTON.

The earth has teem'd with prodigies, this ſure
Out-monſters all.

Enter RAYMOND, haſtily, with a ſword in his hand.

RAYMOND.

On what purpoſe art thou here?

MORTON.

Lord Raymond cannot be a ſtranger ſure.

RAYMOND.

A dagger!—what haſt thou done?

MORTON.

Did not my lord approve the deed?

RAYMOND.

RAYMOND.

What deed?

MORTON.

How's this?—My lord,
I had your ſanction, ratified by Grey,
With promiſe of high recompence the hour
When Saliſbury ſhou'd expire.

RAYMOND.

Accurs'd be he that told thee ſo, and thou
That gav'ſt him credit!

MORTON.

This is ſtrange!

RAYMOND.

Approve!
I did not; by the pow'rs of Truth I did not—
Remorſeleſs villain!—Where, where ſhall I hide
Me? whither ſhall I fly?—Oh deed of horror!—
Thy blood, deteſted hireling, ſhall in part
Compenſate—

MORTON.

Hold—He cannot ſure diſſemble—
Wiſh you, my lord, this deed were yet undone?

RAYMOND.

What wou'd the monſter?—Oh! cou'd I recall
His life by killing twenty thouſand ſlaves
Like thee, it were a comfort.

MORTON.

I believe
That you are innocent; know then, my lord—
He lives—he ſleeps; and ſleeps ſecure of harm.

RAYMOND.

Take heed thou doſt not trifle.

MORTON.

I will confeſs
Me true, and Heav'n forgive my foul intent!
I undertook to ſlay this innocent;
Approach'd him as a friend—I ſaw his ſufferings;
Saw his diſtracted wife: at length I curs'd,
And in my heart abjur'd the wicked purpoſe.

RAYMOND.

Had'ſt thou the goodneſs? Then, perhaps—

MORTON.

I thought
Haply that you yourſelf might ſoon relent.
This inſtrument of purpos'd cruelty,
I took; and with a fair-deviſed tale
Of Saliſbury's death, amus'd the guilty wretch
That would enſnare your quiet.

RAYMOND.

Is this honeſt?

MORTON.

Approach, my lord, approach, and let your eye
Be witneſs of my truth—In doing thus,
I thought I ſhould be deem'd Lord Raymond's friend.

RAYMOND.

Thou wert the beſt of friends!--Retire thou now—
[*Exit* MOR.
One way there yet remains to reconcile
This double war, and heal my tortur'd boſom—
Thou, that ſo ſoundly ſleep'ſt, unguarded thus
[*going towards the ſide ſcene.*
Againſt whatever ill that may approach thee,
Awake!

Awake! rouſe from the bed of liſtleſs ſleep,
And ſee who comes to greet thee.

Enter Lord SALISBURY.

Lord SALISBURY.

——Do I dream!
Or am I in the regions of the unbleſt,
Beſet with monſters!—Tho' thou art a fiend,
I will attempt thee.

RAYMOND.

Ruſh not on my weapon.
I have ſought thee on a cauſe which honour loves,
And wou'd not have thee marr my ſoul's fair purpoſe.

Lord SALISBURY.

Inglorious! baſe! O ſhame to manhood!—Dearly
Shalt thou atone the accumulated wrongs
That I do bleed withal. Nor ſea, nor earth,
Tho' thou ſhould'ſt traverſe her remoteſt climes,
Shall ſhelter thee from my determin'd fury.

RAYMOND.

Think not that I ſhall fly thee; or that I
Have ſought thee now, but on ſuch terms as even
May challenge thy applauſe. I come a foe
Indeed, but I do come a generous foe.

Lord SALISBURY.

A generous foe!—The brave indeed aſpire
To generous acts; their every thought looks up,
And honour's dictates are their only function:
But thou!—what terms woud'ſt thou propoſe?
What act
Of that eſſential virtue, that may raze
The ignoble ſtains wherewith thou art polluted?

RAY-

RAYMOND.

The ignoble, and the brave alike have err'd;
And he, that re-aſcends to virtue's height,
Does often ſnatch a wreath, which never bloom'd
On ſafer wiſdom's brow—Firſt let me looſe
Thoſe ignominious bonds, which have indeed
My own diſhonour'd, not the wearer's arm.
[*Takes off his chains.*]

Lord SALISBURY.

—Say, to what purpoſe tends this honeſt ſeeming?

RAYMOND.

That I have wrong'd thee, I confeſs—take this
[*Gives him a ſword, and draws another.*]
The only reſtitution I have left.
I know thou never canſt forgive, nor I
Forget; the ſword then judge between.

Lord SALISBURY.

——Indeed!
Lives there ſo much of honour then within thee?
Spite of the mighty wrongs which thou haſt done
Me, I do thank thee——

RAYMOND.

Now Fortune mark her favourite!—
[*Loſes his ſword in the encounter.*
Then ſhe is partial, and I muſt ſubmit.

Lord SALISBURY.

Take up thy ſword again; my fair revenge
Diſdains too cheap a conqueſt.

RAYMOND.

'Tis too much.
Oh! generous! generous even to cruelty!—
Some way I wou'd repay thee—Oh! that I
[*Takes up his ſword.*

Had

Had never ſeen thy wife!—It may not be—
Then let me tear for ever from my breaſt
The guilty paſſion: thus I thank thee—thus
[*Wounds himſelf.*
Atone the miſchiefs, that—oh— [*Falls.*

Lord SALISBURY.

This indeed
Atones for all. Thou much-miſguided youth!
What tempted thee to ſtray ſo wide from honour?

RAYMOND.

Aſk, aſk that villain; he will anſwer all—
That villain Grey! whoſe wicked arts ſeduc'd me—
Forgive——I die, I die; a dreadful proof
What ills await the wretch, who gives his ear
To vicious counſels.

Lord SALISBURY.

Dreadful proof, indeed!—
I do forgive thee, ſo forgive thee Heaven!

Re-enter MORTON.

Now where's my wife? where is my friend Leroches?

MORTON.

My lord, by my aſſiſtance he has fled.
I ſaw how vain your purpoſe to eſcape;
His ſingle flight was unobſerv'd—your friends
In queſt of whom he haſted, are arriv'd;
[*A trumpet is heard.*
That trumpet ſpeaks it.

Lord SALISBURY.

It is, it is ſir Ardolf!—See! he comes.

Enter ARDOLF, and KNIGHTS.

ARDOLF.

My noble friend!—ſafe! crown'd with conqueſt too!

Lord

Lord SALISBURY.

Saw you Leroches?

ARDOLF.

My lord,
He ſought the caſtle by a private path;
I thought he had been here by this.

Lord SALISBURY.

'Tis well.
But where's my wife? my ſon? my ſoul is maim'd
Of half it's joys till I've again embrac'd them.

Enter ELEANOR.

ELEANOR.

My lord! my lord! the counteſs and lord William—
Send, ſend and ſave them from deſtruction.
With horſes that outſtrip the winds, the villains
Have borne her from the caſtle.

Lord SALISBURY.

Raviſh'd by villains!---Mount your horſes, haſte---

ARDOLF.

Say, which way have they fled?

ELEANOR.

Weſt of the caſtle:
Heaven grant their ſwiftneſs mock not your beſt ſpeed!

ARDOLF.

Now good my lord, if I might ſpeak—

Lord SALISBURY.

Speak not
To me, but forth and ſcower the country—

ARDOLF.

ARDOLF.

Hark!
Methought I heard a voice—

ELEANOR.

And I, methought—
Perhaps Heav'n has been kind; perhaps 'tis ſhe.

Lady SALISBURY entering.

Now huſh'd be ev'ry fear—Where, where's my heroe,
That I may once more hold him to my boſom.

Enter Lady SALISBURY and Lord WILLIAM, conducted by LEROCHES.

Lord SALISBURY.

'Tis ſhe! 'tis ſhe!—
My wife is in my arms again!—Speak, ſpeak;
O! whence this precious, this unlook'd event?

Lady SALISBURY.

When the fell ruffian,
When Grey with impious hands had ſnatch'd us hence,
Then came my guardian angel, came your friend,
And reſcued us from ruin.

LEROCHES.

Happy hour!
I took the path which brought me to their reſcue!
The atrocious villain fell beneath this arm.

Lord SALISBURY.

My wife!
My ſon! my friend! my God! my guardian God!

ELEANOR.

O joy! that they are here again!

Lord SALISBURY.

They're here! they're here! my wife and ſon are here!—
Proclaim it, O ye ſons of light! ſpread wide
Your ſtarry pinions, angels, ſpread them wide,
And trumpet-loud throughout th' unmeaſur'd tracts
Of higheſt Heaven, that virtue is made happy.

Lady SALISBURY.

Let the ſun ceaſe to ſhine, the planets ceaſe,
Drop every ſtar from his ethereal height,
E'er I forget thee, ſource of every good!

Lord SALISBURY.

Friends, I am much beholden to you all.
My love! the gloom, that overſpread our morn,
Is now diſpers'd; our late miſhaps
Recall'd, ſhall be th' amuſing narrative,
And ſtory of our future evening, oft
Rehears'd. Our ſon too—he ſhall hang upon
The ſounds, and lift his little hands in praiſe
To Heav'n; taught by his mother's bright example,
That, to be truly good, is to be bleſs'd.

FINIS.